

As per our record, no World Bank team has officially visited Tamil Nadu to make a feasibility report in connection with the State Health Systems Development Project.

Asthma

*140. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT:
SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any survey or study of children suffering from Asthma due to polluted air in the country particularly in Metropolitan areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) to (c) Government have not conducted any survey on the State-wise prevalence of asthma in children. However, the preliminary findings of some studies conducted in Delhi reveal a higher incidence of bronchial asthma among school children. The Indian Council of Medical Research has reported that there is no direct evidence to suggest that air pollution itself can be the cause of asthma. Allergies like pollen, house dust and certain food articles can also trigger off asthma attacks.

Apart from providing health education and treatment facilities for the disease, the Government have launched several measures to control pollution.

Dignity of National Flag

1290. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ:
SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT:
SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Tricolour was upside down when the Prime Minister was signing agreement with Israeli President Ezer Weizman on December 30, 1996;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that such lapses do not recur in future?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It was a lapse that the National Tricolour was not in the correct position. Those concerned have been instructed to ensure that such a lapse does not recur in the future.

MIG-29 Fighter Aircraft

1291. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether MIG-29 fighter aircraft has set up one of the best safety records in the world;

(b) if so, the details regarding its performances;

(c) whether the Government requires more of this fighter-cum-trainer jets; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (d) Mig-29 is an air superiority/air defence fighter aircraft with a good safety record. It is an agile and highly manoeuvrable aircraft capable of supersonic speed at low level and carrying long range as well as short range combat missiles. There is no requirement, according to the existing approved unit establishment, of either the fighter or trainer version of this aircraft at present.

Killing of Fishermen

1292. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian fishermen shot dead by Sri Lankan Navy during past twelve months; and

(b) the response of Indian Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Twenty incidents of shooting at Indian fishing vessels in the Palk Straits, resulting in the death of eleven fishermen, have been reported to the Government during the last twelve months. Each incident was taken up with the Sri Lankan authorities. They have denied the involvement of their Navy in a large number of reported cases and in some cases, the investigations are still not complete. The Sir Lankan Navy has acknowledged its involvement in three incidents which resulted in the death of our fishermen.

(b) India protested at every incident of violence against its fishermen and has emphasized to the Government of Sri Lanka the need for restraint in dealing with fishermen.

The External Affairs Minister during his recent visit to Sri Lanka (January 19-22, 1997) discussed the problems faced by Indian fishermen with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and conveyed our serious concern at the incidents of violence against them. Both sides agreed on the need to take steps to avoid untoward incidents in each others' waters and to address the problems faced by the fishermen in a spirit of compassion and understanding.

Further discussions on problems faced by the fishermen were held during a visit by a Sri Lankan delegation in February, 1997. Both sides agreed to examine modalities to ensure the safety of fishermen and to deal with cases of fishermen straying across the International Boundary Line.